

8 THE SETTING

114 Geidam in the north, where another anthropologist, Abraham Rosman, and his wife were working. Discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Rosman helped all of us to see many of the unique features of Kanuri life that stemmed from our particular towns as against more general Kanuri patterns of behavior that were widespread throughout the society. We also became acutely aware of the kinds of variations that could occur across communities as they varied in size, ethnic composition, and quality of the political leadership. At the end of the first field trip, my wife and I spent three months in the capital city of Maiduguri looking at government reports and district notebooks, and acquainting ourselves with many of the special activities that characterize courtly life at the center of the emirate.

[175] In 1964 and again in 1965 I returned to Bornu. On my previous visit the [648] country had been a colonial holding of Great Britain, now it was part of the independent nation of Nigeria. My task in this second visit was to gather statistics on [121] marriage and on divorce rates. But it also gave me a chance to see old friends, and catch up on what had been happening locally since my last visit seven years earlier. Some changes were readily apparent. A large number of deep wells were sunk all [178] over the province, and these now provide enough water for a greatly expanded [312] livestock population. Everywhere the cattle are healthier, fatter, and above all much [233] more in evidence. They block roads and are seen herded in large numbers to and fro wherever one wanders over the countryside. Furthermore the people are less [164] afflicted by parasites because the deep water is uncontaminated, as much of it was not during my first visit. There is now a large modern abattoir and a ground-nut [253] oil refinery in the capital city, and in late 1964 the Nigerian railway finally pushed [258] through to Maiduguri to connect the Bornu capital with Nigeria's national railway [496] system. On the other hand, detailed questions about various traditional practices indicated that there have been few changes at the cultural and social level. At the [197] political level where there were English District Officers and other officials of the regional government, now these posts are filled by Nigerians, generally from other parts of northern Nigeria. However it is for the most part correct to use the present tense in describing Bornu, and when this is not true I will attempt to mention the special circumstances that have brought on the changes.

632 Magumeri, our home for seventeen months in 1956 and 1957, sits on top [114] of one of the ridges of Bornu, and there is a steep climb onto it from the motor [361] road that travels along the bottom of the ridge for most of the year. During the [491] rains, the road runs along the sandy top of the ridge, to keep clear of the large muddy areas formed at the ridge bottom. Magumeri includes approximately 2000 [162] people about half of whom live in surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. It is a district capital and thus has a two-room primary school, a [634] court house, and the large compound of the district head who administers twenty- [368] one village areas, containing 50,000 people, living in an area of approximately 850 [162] square miles. The village has a weekly market on Sunday, and is divided up into a number of wards under the village area head who is also the political leader of its [143] surrounding hamlets and officially the political subordinate of the district head. Except for the fact that it has a somewhat lower proportion of non-Kanuri compared to most others, Magumeri is a "typical" Bornu village in terms of its size, occupational ranges of the population, and influences it receives from the capital and the world beyond the emirate. Indeed this is why I chose to spend most of my time

there. That it did not turn out to be "typical" in all respects is not surprising, given the relatively large numbers of people there are in Bornu and the range of variation that such a large population can quite normally exhibit.

For the first week or so in Magumeri, the Bornu Native Authority appointed a young man who was to serve as our interpreter and guide—telling the people our purpose in coming to live in their village and helping us to get settled into our new surroundings. At first the local Magumeri officials found it all hard to believe, and kept asking why we wanted to live right in the village, rather than reopening an old, deserted, and I suspected snake infested and ramshackle government rest house about a mile away. However, they politely accepted our firm desire to live in the village even if they disagreed with the idea. Soon I decided to live at the end of the plaza facing the district chief's compound, across the open 200 yards of sand which stretched between his house and mine. The interpreter helped with all these arrangements, and in the ten days he was with us I took down a rough outline of the entire culture using him as an informant. As an interpreter, he accompanied me to the compound of the village area head and we asked if I could take down his genealogy and that of some of his neighbors in order that people might become acquainted with the kinds of questions I would be asking later on. At the same time, my wife began compiling a short dictionary of Kanuri nouns, verbs, and useful phrases, using our interpreter as her major source.

For the next four months, we struggled to learn the language and to get our house built—it kept falling down all the time we lived in it—and to begin making a few friends. The first ten days had been so rich and fruitful that what came afterwards seemed all the harder to accept. Without the language, very little could be accomplished; we could watch but not ask questions about what it all meant. The local school teacher who knew very little English offered his help. He would teach us Kanuri, he said, help us to understand the customs of the people, if we would help him to learn English. And slowly this exchange blossomed into a close friendship that has lasted through the years. Slowly, too, little phrases of Kanuri conversation jumped out at us as understandable items from a background of unintelligible conversation. In about four months my wife and I could converse haltingly with one another, and in six months we were speaking—with an accent, with bad grammar, and a limited vocabulary—but we were speaking nonetheless.

During this first six months several significant things happened that affected the course of our work. First, the district head who mistrusted us when we had arrived began to relax when nothing dire seemed to follow from our presence on his doorstep. Eventually he and I became friends and his acceptance of our presence in Bornu, and Magumeri in particular, along with his conviction that I was in fact studying the customs of his people, helped and many others followed his lead. Secondly, I became very ill with hepatitis, and had to leave Magumeri for two months. No one (we were told later) believed for a minute that we would ever return after such a dreadful illness—but we did. And our return was a triumphant one. For several days visitors poured in to tell us what had been happening during my illness, and what was going to happen, and so on. We had come home, we said, and Magumeri made us feel that it was indeed a homecoming.

Slowly but surely life settled into a pattern and my wife and I became identifiable members of the community and known throughout the entire emirate as "the Europeans of Magumeri."

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holding this title had very few of these offices left—they were now the rights of persons holding quite different titles.

The economy of Bornu was a semi-specialized one. Almost everyone grew some crops, except a few cattle nomads, but at the same time during the long dry season people carried on craftwork, trade, and other specialized activities, such as providing medical or barbering services, or entertainment for those who were willing to pay. Everyone had access to new land, over which a person might establish ownership by his act of clearing it. If he used the land for only a few years, and stopped, then the land passed back into bush with no owner. Continued long-term use, especially that involving inheritance, meant that the owner could do with it what he pleased and transfer it to whomever he pleased. In other words the Kanuri had property concepts of usufruct or use-right, but they also had notions of freehold or private property in which land could be transferred by an individual after he had used it for a long time, or it had been passed on to his heirs.

The people raised specialized crops in the kingdom and practiced a myriad of different crafts. Each local craft was organized into a craft guild that helped set production and price standards under a local craft leader who benefited economically from his position and tried to pass it down through the male line. Markets, too, were under headmen and all goods to be traded went to weekly markets to which came thousands of people from the surrounding area.

Trade was accomplished by barter for the most part, although several forms of currency developed, which can be called special purpose or limited purpose money. For various kinds of trade, and within limits, certain objects—a man's robe, iron bars, slaves, horses, cotton rolls, Maria Theresa dollars, and other items—could be used. The trans-Saharan trader came to Bornu for slaves; he therefore demanded payment in slaves, and slaves became a kind of currency for this trade. People from Bornu traded south of Lake Chad for iron bars. These bars could be used to purchase anything in the markets southeast of Bornu where they were the chief export commodity. The same thing is true of cloth in the southern areas of Bornu where it was manufactured and where it was a major export item. Cloth rolls purchased any number of commodities from Bornu but only in that north-south trade. Cowrie shells came very late to Bornu (1820-1850) and never achieved the success as currency that they did elsewhere.

Another and important method of distribution of goods was carried out within the political system itself. Political superiors gave out enormous quantities of cloth, food, horses, and robes on particular holy days or special events such as rites of passage, or wrestling matches. On one occasion a witness in the early part of the century watched the Shehu give away more than a thousand men's robes and an equal number of bullocks and sheep. Although one would expect the leaders to give more than other men, they also served as a model for the population so that the amount of distribution actually carried on in this way must have been very great indeed.

Another important facet of the economy was foreign trade. Although the famous trans-Saharan caravans are supposed to have declined during the nineteenth century, by all accounts they were still of considerable importance for Bornu. Into Bornu came calico, cotton prints, fine silk, sword blades, writing paper, looking glasses, needles, razors, scissors, knives, cheap jewelry, and guns mostly from Eu-

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592 the money weekly to his wives for petty market purchases and does all major pur-
462 chases of food and clothing on his own. He also pays for ceremonies, transporta-
tion, and most of the gift-giving engaged in by himself and others in the house-
[434] hold. Except for the sale of cooked food, pottery production, and female hair
dressing, men control all income producing work of any kind in the entire society.

Households as Consumers

592 Almost all people in Bornu use, obtain, or eat the things they need because
511 they are members of particular households or are related to a nearby household as a
subordinate of its household head. The patterns of consumption vary enormously
[184] from that of a rural peasant to that of a wealthy trader or political leader in the
city. However, the vast bulk of the population stays within a fairly uniform range
[264] that involves a relatively low level of consumption. Most families, especially those
in rural areas, eat two meals a day; one between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and the other
in the early evening between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. Men of the compound and their
[369] male friends eat together while the women eat separately. Smaller snacks are eaten
[264] during the day, and in the city it is common to eat more often especially among
salaried workers who return home for breakfast about 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. and finish
[262] the work day at 2:00 to 2:30 P.M. at which time they eat a noon-day meal. The average
rural household consumes about eight pounds of millet (the staple grain food)
every day, or about one and a half tons per year. The millet comes from farm prod-
ucts used by the household plus any buying that has to be done to augment this.
For those few at the higher end of the social scale food bills can be enormous. One
political leader in the capital claims that during his Mayday he used to feed as
many as seventy people a day and had to have a very smoothly-running household
to get this much food processed and ready for his guests on a daily basis. In the
ordinary peasant household men give their wives money on a weekly basis to pur-
chase condiments for the staple food and sometimes meat as well although many of
the richer men prefer to buy meat themselves. The money, usually anywhere from
thirty cents to about \$4.50 is given to the wife, or to each wife, or sometimes to the
senior wife who then divides it among the co-wives.¹

592 To an outsider Kanuri food seems almost infinitely expandable. I have
261 often watched one bowl of food brought into the presence of a household head. He
571 would glance around at the half dozen or so of us present and then ask us to join
576 him, as he had to do by custom. On the other hand household heads have com-
plained to me that they feed too many. "But what can we do?" they say, friends
and would-be clients or subordinates know when food is to be brought, and they
simply appear, at which point custom forces the host to be gracious. Those who eat
continually at a friend's or a relative's house are in his debt and he may use their
services as he wishes. This is one of the principal means by which clientship starts
to operate. If the client eats with the patron, and the patron asks for services, and
if both are satisfied, the relationship soon becomes an established one.

000 Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as

[436] ¹ Nigerian money is in pounds, shillings, and pence. I have translated values here at the rate
of \$2.80 American to £1 Nigerian.

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222 Lastly gum arabic, which is the base from which gum drops are made, is collected from the kolkol tree (*Acacia arabica*). The trees grow wild, and are fairly common in the area of Gel-dam. The villagers collect the solidified resin and sell the [434] gum arabic to the companies. This is a secondary source of cash, and the distribution of the trees is fairly limited.

[262] Some species of plants are gathered for food. The leaves of the kuka tree are the most important, and are commonly used 224 in food preparation. Hunting is of minor importance. Full-time hunters are almost never found. In the larger villages and towns organized hunts are carried out by the young men. In such cases the game, typically gazelle and guinea fowl, are 226 surrounded and brought down by thrown sticks. Fishing is carried out in the rivers and in Lake Chad. Fish are caught by a variety of means--they are trapped in large woven traps, netted, and hooked, and in Lake Chad larger species are harpooned. [262] Fish are an important food source for communities on the shores [184] of rivers and lakes, but are not generally important for the Kanuri as a whole.

438 Trade always has played an important part in the Kanuri 443 economy, and this would naturally follow in a society where [433] rural-urban distinctions are centuries old. The kasugu, or [369] market, is a central part of every Kanuri town. The Kanuri [366] market is primarily and almost exclusively a local market, where village farmers can sell agricultural produce and buy the products made by artisans of the town. In addition, limited regional exchange is effected through the market. External

602 younger brother (karami) of the child's father, a relative be-
627 longing to the child's dur bube, will avenge the child's death,
and under those circumstances the law will not punish the avenger. The karami of the child's mother will do nothing, for should he avenge the death of his sister's child the law states that he himself may be punished. This seems to be the only case for stating that the dur bube is stronger than the dur chambe.

174 It is extremely difficult to reconstruct earlier Kanuri
611 social organization, and to indicate the changes which it has
gone through. It is evident however, that patrilineal descent
groups were present at the time of the accounts of Barth and
Nachtigal, both of whom spent long periods of time with the Ka-
174 nuri in the nineteenth century. For earlier periods of the
history of Bornu, names are given for tribes, and, in the his-
tory of federation, conquest and civil strife, these names some-
times have an ethnic or linguistic character; at other times
they seem to designate political entities; and again they also
resemble clans at times.

192 The Kanuri have a word, jili, which means "kind" or "sort",
563 but can be used specifically for "nation," "people," or "kin
[60] group." A person's jili would first be given as Kanuri; he
would then indicate sub-groups of Kanuri--Kanuri proper, Buduwai,
563 Mobber, Manga, Kwoyam etc. These sub-groups today speak dialects
• 184 of Kanuri which are all mutually intelligible, and no other in-
174 digenous languages. They represent ethnic sub-groups who now
[97] share in the same larger culture, but who may have entered Bornu

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523 at different times, or may have become assimilated to Kanuri
17 culture. A shatter-belt of small tribes, part-pagan and part-Moslem, and strongly influenced by Kanuri culture, rings Bornu Emirate. (These have been described in Chapter I.) North of Bornu are the Kanembu, closely related culturally and linguistically to the Kanuri, and with an inter-twined history that goes back to the Empire of Kanem, which preceded the Empire of Bornu.

[614] The Kanembu and the Kanuri share another set of jilis--which appear to be the remnants of patrilineal kin groups, or patrisibs.

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614 The word jili will here be used in a very restricted sense to refer to the sib. Informants with an interest in the history of Bornu and with a strong historic sense relate that the jilis were no longer functioning in the days when Shehu Laminu ruled at Kukawa. Kanuri, Kanembu and all the sub-groups of Kanuri (Kwoyam, Mobber, Manga etc.) were sub-divided into jilis with

[304] the same names cross-cutting them. A child was of the same jili as his father, and each jili had its distinctive facial scars by which its members could immediately be identified. The jili was not endogamous. Each jili had its common ancestor, whose name is known for every jili; each jili had as its head

[651] someone appointed by the Mai, or king. The primary function of the jili head was to collect taxes (hara ji) from the people of

[643] his jili. The Mails of old were of the jili Magumi, the royal

[613] sib, and of the sub-jili Sef. All individuals of the sub-jili Sef are descended from Sef Isami who is reputed to have come

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The previous chapter has been devoted to an overall view of Kanuri culture, against which the recent changes brought about by contact with the industrial Western world can be measured. It is apparent that this description, which attempts to provide the general features of the culture, is primarily of what has been called ideal culture. It is generalized, highly abstract and frequently derives from statements by informants about how the 'good Kanuri' acts in various types of situation.

An anthropologist customarily studies a community, which occupies the focus of his analytical attention. From his study of a particular community, he makes judgments concerning behavior which he considers to be idiosyncratic for that community, selects out and discounts atypical aspects of the culture which are represented by his community, in order to arrive at a statement about the larger patterns of the culture with which he is concerned. In the study of small homogeneous cultures, it was usually not important to distinguish between the two processes since small total size and homogeneity meant that there were little or no differences between various communities. What held for one camp, one lineage, or one settlement, undoubtedly held for all. In the study of more complex cultures to which anthropologists have turned in the recent decades, of which the Kanuri are an example, it is imperative to recognize the distinctions drawn here. Kanuri culture is large and heterogeneous, and has only the most incidental resemblance to an American Indian tribe or to an isolated Pacific island, the "type cul-

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- 121 tures" which have served as models for the anthropologist. The
• 184 Kanuri have had a powerful conquest state, a market economy,
[05] and a stratified society. These larger sociological characteristics have brought about sub-cultural differences, which have both vertical and horizontal manifestations. The vertical segments of Kanuri culture are found in regional variations: Kanuri sub-groups like the Manga, Mobber and Buduwal. Horizontal
[361] segments inhere in the rigid class system. The distinction between rural and urban manifestations of Kanuri culture are both vertical and horizontal in nature: vertical in that towns and villages represent geographically distinct units, horizontal in that towns and cities are a reflection of political and economic complexity, and townsmen share in a common sub-culture wherever they are located.

- 121 Given the complexity of Kanuri culture noted above, it is imperative that the observer describe a particular community rather than Kanuri culture as a whole. It is necessary, first of all, to discuss the particular nature of the community which he studied, to define it within the various dimensions which have been set forth as guide lines for Kanuri culture generally. The problem which has provided the orientation for the present study will be presented within the cultural context of a single community. While the writer feels that the approach suggested here is valid for culture contact situations generally, he realizes that the initial level of generalization requires him to move from a discussion of a particular community, with its own

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634 see that, in order to succeed politically in future years, a
871 school education is an advantage since the youngster learns to
555 speak English, and learns enough of the ways of the Englishman
177 to better himself. Thus the group of NA Malams that has emerged
566 derives from the aristocracy or from minor political official-
554 dom. Their goals are commensurate with their social background;
all hope some day to be appointed Lowan or Ajia, or to achieve
political power by gaining a post in Maiduguri. As a group,
therefore, they belong within the political structure, though
their roles are not specifically political. Their aspirations
are the traditional Kanuri aspirations toward political power
and social prestige. However, the means to obtain power which
[178] is represented by the NA Malams is newly emergent in Kanuri so-
ciety.

E. Religion at the Communal Level.

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76 Religious practice among the Kanuri does not differ from
• [184] community to community. Therefore, in discussing the manifesta-
tions of religion in the community of Geldam, it will not be
necessary to describe Islamic observances, such as the ritual
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79 prayer. The present discussion will be limited to two areas:
[184] religious specialists and their place in the social system of
Geldam; and religious festivals as they are celebrated at the
community level.

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793 a religious role, but it receives political recognition. There are two Limans in Geidam. One Liman leads prayers on religious holidays, and is called Liman Ngumeribe (ngumeri means religious festival); the other leads the communal Friday prayers and is called Liman Zamabe (Zema means Friday). The Liman Ngumeribe conducts prayers twice each year, at the two most important [792] festivals. When Yerima Mustapha became Ajia of Geidam, he instituted the practice of public communal prayers on the dandal each 794 Friday. This is frequently--though not always--done in Kanuri towns, and had not been the customary practice in Geidam when 793 Kaigama had been Ajia. Yerima made inquiries as to who was con- 634 sidered the most respected Malam in Geidam, and appointed that 292 Malam as the Liman Zamabe of Geidam. The new Liman Zamabe was 554 given a kulugu and a burnoose as marks of office. Though the Liman Ngumeribe had previously held his office under Kaigama, Yerima also gave him a kulugu and a burnoose when he came to Geidam.

2. Religious Festivals.

796 The month of Ramadan (April 2 to May 1, in 1957) is spent 785 in fasting. During that time neither food nor water is taken 183 into the mouth from sunrise to sunset. All Kanuri above the 561 age of fifteen or sixteen keep the fast. For several years before that boys and girls keep a modified fast, in which three days of fasting are followed by nine days in which the fast is not observed. In Geidam all Kanuri outwardly keep the fast, al-

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a medium sized rural Kanuri town, learning the language and making contacts among the local residents.

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In approximately four months the writer could carry on interviews in the language, and by the end of the eighth, an outline of political and economic structure in the area was gained, plus some understanding of kinship, cultural values, and household economics. Although participant observation techniques continued until the end of the field trip, it was now deemed possible to introduce some quantitative techniques into data collection. For this purpose, questionnaires were designed on market involvement of peasant cultivators, kinship behaviour norms, marriage preferences among tribes, ranking of traditional and non-traditional occupations and a scheduled interview was made up concerning household income and expenditure. A Kanuri assistant was hired to conduct the surveys on market involvement of peasant cultivators and kinship behaviour norms. In addition, he kept records on the crop production techniques and amounts harvested as well as daily intake of the staple grain food, for seventy-five farmers in three towns.

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The complexity of Kanuri society makes generalizations based on intensive work in only one community extremely precarious. Thus other parts of Bornu were visited, especially the capital Maiduguri, and Gaidam, a district capital in the northern part of the Emirate. Side trips to Dikwa and Biu Emirate and Damboa and Dematuru districts helped to broaden the perspectives of observation made on the basis of a long term stay in Magumeri. Innumerable visits on horseback to small hamlets helped in this respect as well. Finally, the variations possible in Kanuri social life were made even more apparent by the presence

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(1) An interpreter was employed for the first ten days and then departed leaving the writer and wife with only one person, the local school teacher, who could speak only a very little English.

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184 of another anthropologist, Mr. A. Rosman, who spent a large part of his field work time in the town of Geidan. Periodic conversations with Mr. Rosman, plus the exchange of visits and information contributed enormously to our understanding of the generality of some Kanuri traits as against the local peculiarities of others.

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[127] During the final three months of field work, the writer and his wife moved into the capital and devoted part of the time to an analysis of all available government records covering the colonial period in the area. Ethnographic work at the court of the Sheku and in Maiduguri as a whole was carried on at the same time. However, it is painfully evident that much more work in the capital, using the methods of urban sociology as well as anthropology, is needed to complete a study which the present work has only begun.

128 The work is in three parts. The first part introduces the people and the locality giving pertinent information of population, geography and ecology. Also included in this section is an historical sketch of the pre-British period as well as an account of the significant changes introduced by the colonial era.

The second part deals with interpersonal relations. Here kinship behaviour norms are related to social interaction in the community at large, and these are described as they operate in the local residence groups. Marriage relations illustrate how the norms of behaviour operate between groups and individuals in the husband-wife relationship. The life cycle material then documents the manner in which individuals are recruited into and live within the small and large scale social structures of the society.

The third part deals with the wider scaled forms of social life. Stratification by various status dimensions is discussed and it

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Unlike some of the larger district capitals, Magumeri has almost no mud houses. Conical, thatched roofed dwellings inside compounds having grass mat walls are the rule. Only the District Head's and the Alkali's (Muslim judge) compounds contain any mud walled dwellings, and only the District Head's compound has mud walls. In the larger villages and District capitals, mud walls are more common as are mud houses. This gives Magumeri village a more rural appearance than many other capitals, since it is in the small villages and hamlets that this type of house predominates.

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In Magumeri the pagan quarter in which millet beer is made is right in the village. More usually pagan quarters are at the extreme edge of a village or at some remove altogether from the main settlement.

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This then is Magumeri. Its representativeness of Kanuri society in general is probably as good as any other village in Bornu.

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After having visited ten other district capitals, stayed in another for nearly a month, and the capital of the Emirate for three months, the writer is keenly aware of local differences but just as aware of the similarities in social life among all people who consider themselves Kanuri. These differences are especially pertinent in relation to the rural/urban dichotomy and between the upper and lower classes of the society. The writer is only too aware that any attempt at all-inclusive generalizations becomes perilous in the face of these ever present differentials in Kanuri life as a whole.

602 elicited with little difficulty:

[682] It is the father's family that is responsible for the dia
[683] (blood-money, compensation to a non-group member and his
group for physical injuries or death brought about by the
activity of own group members), they will support you if
you get into trouble, it is from them that you get your
property, if you marry and have no money, they will col-
lect it for you, and you don't have to pay it back, but
you will help them when asked for other people in the
family - they are the mai durbe (king of the families).

Upper class members made the following generalization in their
statements about the father's family: they felt that the great
utility of the patrilineal group is its readiness to support an
individual member when he is in trouble, and of course its eventual
material use to him in terms of property.

When informants were asked at some other time about the
matrilateral kin group without any reference to the father's family
and in the context of a conversation having to do with loans and
credit, the answer was similar to the following given by a small
hamlet farmer:

Oh yes, for these things (credit) you must go to your
mother's family, they will not refuse you anything, for
they feel for you like a mother feels for her child.

Upper class members observed similarly that if sunna kalewa (if all
was well) then people like their mother's family better, it is more
[184] affectionate. They also felt that it might be easier to borrow
money from the matrilateral groups but were not as unanimous in
this respect as the lower class member (neither class was complete-
ly unanimous).

[152] In answer to questions about jealousy (kandult) dif-
ferences, all informants agreed that there was much more of this
among the patrilineal group. One informant expanded this as follows:

605 play with his patrilineal cousins. As in the matrilineal case, if ego changes his joking-wife, the tiu joking relationships shift also in association with the change. That is to say, these joking relationships may change in their personnel from time to time, but are ordered in relation to the adult marriage rules in each separate situation.

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Although no attempt was made to measure class differences in the cousin joking relationships, it should be noted here that several informants claimed that the above joking relations were "unbecoming" for good proper behaviour and they did not practise such customs.

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Outside the kinship system a joking relationship may hold between a master and his slave, although this is usual only when the slave is an entertainer of some kind. Informants denied that it occurred when the slave is merely serving his master in an

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ordinary work situation. Amongst the various occupations, joking relations obtain between smiths and butchers; barber-doctors and smiths; mallams (koranic teacher-priests) and hunters; kola-nut wholesalers and retailers; dyers and tailors; a builder of mud houses and his labourers; a fire-wood seller and his customers;

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pepper sellers and kola-nut wholesalers. Joking relations also hold between clans such as Ngala'a and Magumi; Nguma and Tara; Kuburi and Tara; Su'urti and Kuburi; or between ethnic groups like Shuwa and Kanuri; Kurdi and Shuwa; Hausa and Fulani; Kanuri and Fulani; Tubu and Monga; Monga and Bédde; Kanembu and Wasili (Arabs).

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In the above relationships which seem in all cases to cover an area of interrelations involving potential conflicts, the

583 only been married two months and had received no use of his capital out-
 593 lay, therefore he would only give the girl back if his total marriage
 602 expenses were returned. He calculated the amount to be twice the bride-
 586 wealth. The judge ruled that since he had only slapped the girl a few
 [695] times there were no grounds to the charge of mistreatment and the hus-
 band should take the young girl to the city with him and try to straight-
 en out his marriage difficulties.

The girl's family then told her to go to the city but not
 play the role of dutiful wife. Her luwali bragged publicly that she
 would be returned quite willingly by the husband inside of a week (it
 was actually three weeks before the girl did return). That is to say,
 it was predicted by the luwali that the husband would break up the mar-
 riage and send the girl out of his house, thereby forfeiting the bride-
 wealth. Once in the city the girl cooked badly, quarrelled with her
 co-wife, emptied the poor man's prayer pot when she needed water, and
 in a hundred little ways made his life miserable. However, she commit-
 ted no one great offence which the husband felt he could legally get
 hold of as a respectable person. (1)

In the end, he lost his temper and told her to get out and
 go back to her family. Before doing so, he recounts how he first gave
 her a sound beating in order to get at least that much satisfaction from
 such a material loss in his investment; for in sending her home he was
 breaking up the marriage and thereby forfeited the bridewealth.

It will be noticed in the above example that the independent

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 [691] (1) The range of complaints for which people will seek adjudication varies
 [184] with socio-economic and rural/urban status. It is an upper class
 norm to keep most marital problems private unless it is absolutely
 necessary to go to court, while in the hamlets a woman was observed
 who, with her agnatic kin as supporters, brought her husband to court
 for having had sexual intercourse too frequently and wanted the
 judge to limit his advances by a ruling of the court.

567 There are no rules governing sexual intercourse with 130.
595 concubines as there

[833] are with wives. A man may sleep with his concubine any time he wishes

[841] or avoid her as much as he pleases, whereas it is mandatory that he
spend alternate nights with wives even if one is menstruating. Con-
flicts may arise between wives and concubines if the latter is overly

567 favoured sexually by the husband. A more serious cleavage arises in
595 the circumstances of the wife's being barren and a concubine having
593 given birth to a son and heir to her master. It is known by all that
428 one day the son will succeed to a large portion of his father's wealth
plus his position as household head. In such a case the boy's slave
mother knows that eventually she is to become the respected senior

• [184] woman of the compound in which she is now a menial. Although one case
was observed, it must be emphasized that such instances are rare in

554 the contemporary society. Only political leaders from the level of
567 town head up, and hereditary nobles were observed to keep concubines.

595
178 An extremely wealthy trader, who felt very proud of his four wives in
seclusion, answered that it would be improper of him to have a concu-
bine because he was only a trader. Seventy-five years ago a man of
his position would have had a score of them.

567 Several upper class informants spoke of the traditional prac-
595 tice of giving young concubines to upper class boys at their circum-
281 cision, so that they might have a female of their own in order to learn
178 about sexual intercourse. Because of the waning of the slave population
numerically this practice seems to be dying out, (only one case of a
male who had been raised in this way of the younger, 20 to 30 years ago,
generation was recorded).

595 When a man marries a second, third, or fourth wife it is
customary for him to give a sum equal to approximately half the luwal-

132.

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[361]
[366]

five to six miles from the other. Magumeri and Ngubura are market towns on the main road to the urban center, while Chingowa has no large weekly market and is off the motor road except for a few months in the wet season when its higher position on a ridge places it on the route of the rainy season road.

Frequency Distribution of Wives Among
78 Male Household Heads

Number of wives	0	1	2	3	4		
Number of males	6	33	31	5	3	Total	78 males
Total number of females	0	33	62	15	12	"	122 females

Thus a total of 78 males had between them 122 women as wives or an average of 1.56 women per man (polygynous households in sample = 50.0%).

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[128]

Although it is probable in the extreme that many of the household heads questioned have since changed either the number and/or the persons of their wives, it is felt that this distribution is a representative and reliable description of Kanuri polygyny.

The quantitative data given gives strength to the qualitative observation that it is just as common to see a man with two wives as it is with one in peasant households. This means that we may evaluate Kanuri polygyny as a well-integrated cultural element that is not only practiced by the wealthy and the powerful, but which has real meaning and behavioural consequences throughout all levels of the society.

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In the marriage relationship itself, cultural tradition directs that the male play the dominant role. He gives his wife (or wives) their market money weekly, their millet for cooking from his granaries, and among high status persons, he usually keeps them secluded as much as possible in his compound. He supposedly makes the major decisions concerning himself, his wife and children, and their

861 We have never seen anyone hit a small child, 158:
but

the warnings are frequent. The "boogy-man" threat is more often used as a warning. For example, last month a group of travelling entertainers brought a very large, ugly hyena to town ... apparently Kachella gana was shown the thing from a distance, and ever since the hyena has been used as a deterrent to investigating the contents of medicine bottles, or venturing beyond the compound door. It works, although Kachella is inclined to laugh somewhat incredulously. (1)

Continuing with the same excerpt, it will be noticed that positive as well as negative learning is begun early and definite, patient teaching by socialising adults is a normal part of every day's activities for the young child:

A plate of food is on the floor of the hut gathering flies. The grandmother says to her little adoptive grandson, "Kachella, pick the plate up. Now take it over there. Be careful, there is food on the plate. Now take that other plate and cover the food over (plates are made of grass). That's right, very good." The operation which would have taken the grandmother a second has been carried out only after two minutes of patient instruction to the child who could not yet speak more than a few words.

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The inception of sex roles begins with the onset of child-

hood and the end of weaning. The boys are tada gana (small boys) and
[858] wear the appropriate small smock and begin to have their heads shaved
[602] in the child hair style of the father's agnatic group. This small boy's hair style often depicts the political affiliations of the father's agnatic group and/or its territorial origins. Thus all the household groups connected to a political leader or coming from a particular
[184] town may share the same small boy's hair style. Some lower class informants in the large urban centre stated that they used whatever hair style they pleased for their small boys when it was observed that no rule seemed to be followed.

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After weaning, the girls are fero gana (small virgin girls)

(1) Excerpt from correspondence by Diana Cohen with the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto (1956).

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This means that although the proportion of the sexes to one another is approximately equal numerically, there would be more women available for marriage than men if the society were not polygynous.

[21] nous. It would be interesting to check cross-culturally whether or not in monogamous societies marriage is associated more with equal ages among mates at its first inception and whether or not polygyny is also associated most often with early female and late male first marriages.

Maturity

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The culture defines a mature man as rashidi. Ideally this connotes that he is married, is not immoderately adulterous, has a compound of his own, an occupation, the use of some land for farming, a recognized position in the community organization as the head of a compound in a ward, or hamlet, a degree of independence which includes the right to move to another community if he wishes, and if he has children, the label is even more applicable. Thus rashidi as a status implies the values which the culture places upon adult male life. It is therefore not only a description of a man's age status, but an evaluation of his accomplishments and behaviour as an adult male in relation to the value system of the culture.

[184]

A few informants, notably higher ranking people, felt that a man should be over 30-35 years of age before he could be defined as rashidi. Most others were more inclined to disregard the age criteria and claim that any man who had been married was a rashidi.

[83]

When a young man is divorced and has no other wives, or even if he is married but is known to be especially attentive to other women he is jokingly referred to as sairo (any person who has not been married,

571 aspire to higher positions in the Bornu political organization. They will be considered in greater detail later.

125 In order to assess more accurately current trends in occu-
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554 pational status among the young western educated group, the senior primary and secondary school population was asked to rank 55 occupations using the same "freedom of choice" instructions employed above for the questionnaire on the various ethnic groups. It was hoped that the methodology would elicit level of aspiration rather than level of achievement scores so that some objective measure of the status ratings of these occupations could be obtained. It is felt that the high position given to such status positions as Shehu and Wasiri indicate that the boys were responding in terms of the actual prestige given to the status rather than judging the position by whether or not it was open to them personally. Although significant differences have not been analysed, some observable differences in the scores of the younger boys as compared to the older boys are suggestive, and therefore these data have been presented separately. The young boys (age 13-15) had African teachers while the older boys have among their teachers Europeans as well as Africans. As in the previous case the test was administered in the Kanuri language.

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● 184 Despite the high correlation between the two groups, it is possible that there are differences in the evaluation of high status occupations among the younger as compared to the older boys. This is indicated by the fact that of the twenty most highly rated occupations the younger boys average (cardinal) rank for European jobs was 9.7, while the older boys average (cardinal) rank for the same variety of job was 11.7. On the other hand, the younger boys average (cardinal)

[Text continues on p. 203]

TABLE VI

Occupational Choices of Maiduguri School Boys *

Senior Primary (younger)				Secondary (older)			
Schools	Choice Occupation	Mean	Average	Choice Occupation	Mean	Average	
(cardinal)		Choice	Deviation	(cardinal)	Choice	Deviation	
1	District Officer	6.99	5.3	1	Shehu of Bornu	5.21	4.7
2	Engineer **	8.27	5.9	2	District Officer	6.03	5.0
3	Medical Officer	8.42	7.2	3	Wasiri of Bornu	7.15	5.2
4	Member of Northern House of Assembly	8.57	5.0	4	Member of Northern House of Assembly	7.72	4.4
5	Shehu of Bornu	8.60	7.0	5	Government Service	9.21	5.4
6	Agricultural Officer	8.98	6.6	6	Koranic Mallam	9.26	9.4
7	Government Service	10.64	6.2	7	Agric. Officer	10.66	6.7
8	Wasiri of Bornu	10.80	7.2	8	N.A.	12.06	6.2
9	N.A.	13.52	6.3	9	Chief Scribe (Maiduguri)	12.19	5.8
10	Bank manager	14.51	7.5	10	Medical officer	12.19	6.2
11	Company (European) manager	15.95	7.4	11	District Head	13.69	5.3
12	Chief Scribe (Maiduguri)	16.31	7.4	12	Alkalai (judge)	17.02	9.3
13	Radio Announcer	16.62	8.2	13	Kaigama (a D.H. to-day) traditional title	17.88	7.9
14	Company (European) clerk	17.15	6.0	14	Bank clerk	18.40	8.1
15	Alkalai (judge)	17.18	7.5	15	Engineer	18.51	9.2
16	Bank clerk	18.70	7.5	16	Company (European) clerk	19.71	6.2
17	Koranic mallam	19.31	9.2	17	Bank manager	20.10	9.3
18	District Head	20.07	8.6	18	Radio announcer	20.76	7.6
19	Journalist	20.20	7.3	19	Farmer	20.97	9.4
20	Mechanic	20.25	8.9	20	Company (European) manager	21.70	8.3
21	N.A. councillor	22.90	8.8	21	Journalist	21.76	7.4
22	Kaigama	24.54	9.5	22	Owner of retail store	22.65	5.9

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E-4, 5

(1956-1957)

1960

MS14 Kanuri MS14

School: Senior Primary (younger)				Secondary (older)			
Choice	Occupation	Mean	Average	Choice	Occupation	Mean	Average
(cardinal)		Choice	Deviation	(cardinal)		Choice	Deviation
23	Truck driver	24.96	7.2	23	Trader (with credit from European company)	22.73	8.0
24	Truck owner	25.25	9.5	24	Village Head	23.94	7.3
25	Owner of retail store	26.53	9.0	25	Nurse (male)	24.45	10.4
26	Nurse (male)	26.86	8.5	26	Hotel (Bar) owner	25.57	6.7
27	Trader (with credit from European company)	27.08	8.9	27	Truck driver	25.93	7.3
28	Village Head	27.75	7.1	28	Mechanic	27.77	9.8
29	Carpenter	28.30	8.9	29	Trader	29.49	10.9
30	Building contractor	28.80	11.1	30	N.A. counsellor	29.61	9.4
31	Hotel (Bar) owner	29.84	8.6	31	Truck owner	30.68	9.5
32	Farmer	30.21	10.5	32	Kachella Shehube (traditional title) no job today	31.88	10.1
33	Scale man (cash crop buyer in bush)	32.51	6.8	33	Building contractor	31.90	9.6
34	Hunter	34.29	8.4	34	Carpenter	31.94	7.8
35	Small retailer at roadside table	35.29	6.9	35	Tailor (on sewing machine)	32.34	7.6
36	Hamlet head	35.82	7.1	36	Scale man (cash crop buyer in bush)	32.91	9.2
37	Kachella Shehube	35.82	10.4	37	Hamlet head	33.46	7.3
38	Blacksmith	35.92	7.7	38	Small retainer at roadside table	33.66	6.8
39	Trader	36.20	9.4	39	Mud house builder	34.82	9.4
40	Tailor (on sewing machine)	36.55	7.8	40	Charm seller	37.52	8.8
41	Shoemaker	36.85	8.4	41	Horse/servant	38.62	6.1
42	Horse/servant	38.16	7.5	42	Hunter	38.88	7.4
43	Mud house builder	38.70	7.6	43	Kola nut seller	38.90	6.3
44	Hat maker	40.33	7.0	44	Shoemaker	39.86	6.8
45	Kola nut seller	40.51	6.0	45	Hat maker	40.00	6.6

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3: Cohen E-4, 5 (1966-1967) 1960

MS14 Kanuri MS14

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Schools: Senior Primary (younger)				Secondary (older)			
Choice (cardinal)	Occupation	Mean Choice	Average Deviation	Choice (cardinal)	Occupation	Mean Choice	Average Deviation
46	Weaver	41.54	9.4	46	Shehu's slave	41.03	9.1
47	Petty broker	41.98	7.2	47	Labourer	41.54	5.9
48	Calabash maker	42.74	7.0	48	Blacksmith	42.05	8.5
49	Barber	42.95	6.0	49	Barber	42.15	6.1
50	Charm seller	43.27	8.9	50	Weaver	42.44	6.9
51	Shehu's slave	43.81	8.0	51	Calabash maker	44.03	6.5
52	Labourer	44.02	6.4	52	Petty broker	45.15	6.5
53	Butcher	45.04	6.1	53	Drummer-entertainer	47.08	5.6
54	Drummer-entertainer	47.23	6.8	54	Butcher	47.33	5.5
55	Moneylender	48.74	6.2	55	Moneylender	47.96	7.0

N - 83; Mean Average Deviation 7.7

N - 67; Mean Average Deviation 7.4

- * Using Spearman's rank order correlation (ρ) on the cardinal choices, the younger and older boys show a correlation of .90 in the ordering of the 55 occupations. (See Siegel, S. Nonparametric Statistics, (1956) pp.202-210).
- ** The week before the test was administered an engineer spoke to the younger boys on the possibilities of future careers in engineering.

463 rank for traditional high status jobs among their first twenty choices
 554 was 12.0, while for the older boys the same score was 7.3. That is to
 184 say, there are grounds for investigating an hypothesis (which needs
 further testing for its validation) that the older schoolboys are less
 enamoured of high status European jobs than their junior school fellows,
 of whom many have just recently come into the city school from bush dis-
 tricts. (This "difference" may, of course, reflect the fact that the
 attempt to create an irreality situation is more difficult for older
 than for younger boys).

178 The occupations which the British have supported by salaried
 463 appointments, such as Shehu, Wasiri, Alkalai, District Head, Village Head,
 554 have kept their higher status. On the other hand, unsupported but tra-
 ditionally high status positions such as Shehu's slave, horsed servant
 of a chief, or Kachella Shehube (colonel in the pre-British Kanuri army)
 have not retained their high status positions, relatively speaking. The
 exception to this rule is the Koranic mallam who, although not give of-
 ficial support in the form of a salary, has kept his high status because
 178 of the continuity of his religious functions into the present day. The
 463 following table compares these types of occupations for both the younger
 554 and older boys, using averaged cardinal rankings.
 184

TABLE VII

Supported and Unsupported Traditionally High Status
Occupations

	Ranking	
	Younger	Older
State supported traditionally high status	15.4	11.9
State unsupported traditionally high status	36.9	31.9

It should be noticed that here again there seems to be a ten-
 dency (not significant statistically) for the older boys to rank the tra-

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• [184]

ditional occupations as having higher status than the younger boys. In their choice of Koranic malla the older boys put that status in 6th place, while the younger boys placed it in 17th from the top status. The main distinction, however, is clearly shown. Once the traditionally high status occupations have lost their support and major functions, they tend to atrophy in the eyes of the population and they are ranked lower.

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For the remaining comparisons, a scale is used which divides the table into high, middle and low status occupations. Those chosen from 1-19 are high; those from 20-38 are middle; and those from 39-55 are low status occupations. Figures given in the tables are average ranks in the category being considered taken from their cardinal positions.

(1)

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[171]

It has been recorded for West Africa by several writers that young African schoolboys are more interested in white collar jobs than in any other kind of occupation, including the technical. (In Leopoldville even the educational jobs are less preferred to clerical work). The Kanuri material indicates that technical and administrative jobs are both accorded high status and are in turn distinguished from all forms of manual labour. In the general category of manual labour, European jobs such as carpenter, truck driver and mechanic are accorded much higher status than traditional jobs such as tailor, shoemaker, calabash maker, or labourer. This is consistent with the qualitative statement made above that, within peasant occupations, material income is a large determinant of the differentiation among occupations. The exception to this generalization is "farmer" which the older boys place 17th, and the young-

- (1) See Jahoda, G., The Social Background of a West African Student Population, British Journal of Sociology (March, 1955); Mercier, P., The Evolution of Senegalese Elites, UNESCO Bulletin of Social Science Number 8 (1956); Comhaire, J., Some Aspects of Urbanization in the Belgian Congo, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 62 (June 1956), pp.8-13.